Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application:

1.   (Currently amended) A file stored in a computer readable medium having a file format for distributing media content from a server computer to a client computer in the form of a transfer file, the file format comprising:

a header section, said header section including media type information, bit rate information describing a bit rate at which a media asset plays out on the client computer, information indicating the time duration of the media asset, and size information for various portions of the transfer file including an index file size information; and

an asset metadata section, said asset metadata section including a source host name, a source asset identifier, and a value indicating a number of plays [[of]] that the media asset can be played out on the client computer to reduce negotiation between the server computer and the client computer and to facilitate a point-to-point or point-to-multipoint distribution of media content.

2.   (Currently amended) The file format of claim 1, wherein the file format further comprising media content, said media content including the media asset described by the header section and the asset metadata section.

3.   (Currently amended) The file format of claim 1, wherein the file format further comprising a signature that identifies the file format to [[a]] the client computer.

4.   (Currently amended) The file format of claim 2, wherein the file format further comprising a signature that identifies the file format to [[a]] the client computer.

5.   (Currently amended) The file format of claim 1, wherein the file format further comprising a user metadata section, said user metadata including information that can be presented to a user.

6.   (Currently amended) The file ~~format~~ of claim 2, <u>wherein the file format</u> further comprising a user metadata section, said user metadata including information that can be presented to a user.

7.   (Currently amended) The file ~~format~~ of claim 2, wherein the media content comprises a movie and the user metadata includes a director name, plot synopsis, and actor names.

8.   (Currently amended) The file ~~format~~ of claim 6, wherein the media content comprises a movie and the user metadata includes a director name, plot synopsis and actor names.

9.   (Currently amended) The file ~~format~~ of claim 2, wherein the media content is presented in an MPEG format and the header section specifies a fast forward/rewind file size.

10.   (Currently amended) The file ~~format~~ of claim 2, wherein the media content is presented in an MPEG format ~~and the header section specifies an index file size~~.

11.   (Currently amended) The file ~~format~~ of claim 1, <u>wherein the file format</u> further comprising:

media content, said media content including the media asset described by the header section and the asset metadata section;

a signature that identifies the file format to [[a]] <u>the</u> client computer;

a user metadata section, said user metadata including information that can be presented to a user; the media content comprises a movie and the user metadata includes a director name, plot synopsis, and actor names; and

the media content is presented in an MPEG format and the header section specifies a fast forward/rewind file size.

Cancel claims 12-25 without prejudice to reinstate or present in a related application.

12.-25. (Cancelled)

26.   (Currently amended) An electronic data stored in a computer readable medium ~~signal~~ including digitally encoded data for distributing media content from a server computer to a client computer in the form of a digital data ~~signal~~ encoding a transfer file, the digital data ~~signal~~ comprising:

a first digital data ~~signal~~ portion encoding a header section, said header section including media type information, bit rate information describing a bit rate at which a media asset plays out on the client computer, information indicating the time duration of the media asset, and size information for various portions of the transfer file including an index file size information; and

a second digital data ~~signal~~ portion encoding an asset metadata section, said asset meta data section including a source host name, a source asset identifier, and a value indicating a number of plays [[of]] that the media asset can be played out on the client computer to reduce negotiation between the server computer and the client computer and to facilitate a point-to-point or point-to-multipoint distribution of media content.

27.   (Currently amended) The data ~~signal~~ of claim 26, further comprising a third digital data ~~signal~~ portion encoding media content, said media content including the media asset described by the header section and the asset metadata section.

28.   (New) The file of claim 1, wherein an extractor module retrieves asset metadata from a media asset database, media content from a file system, and user metadata from a user metadata database, and assembles them into the transfer file.

29.   (New) The electronic data stored in a computer readable medium of claim 26, wherein an extractor module retrieves asset metadata from a media asset database, media content from a file system, and user metadata from a user metadata database, and assembles them into the transfer file.

30.   (New) A transfer file stored in a computer readable medium having a file format for efficient streaming of media assets from a server computer to a plurality of client computers in the form of a transfer file that is adapted for point-to-point and point-to-multipoint distribution of

the transfer file between the server computer and the plurality of client computers across a computer network, the file comprising:

a signature indicating the format of the transfer file;

a header section including information related to various portions of the transfer file, said header section including media asset type information, bit rate information describing a bit rate at which a media asset plays out on the plurality of client computers, information indicating the time duration of the media asset, and size information for various portions of the transfer file including an index file size information;

an asset metadata section describing media asset content, said asset metadata section including a source host name, a source asset identifier, and a value indicating a number of plays that the media asset can be played out on the client computer to reduce negotiation between the server computer and the client computer and to facilitate a point-to-point or point-to-multipoint distribution of media content;

media content that is capable of being displayed to a user at the at least one client computer; and

user metadata that describes the media content and is capable of being displayed to the user;

the transfer file format being organized to include the asset metadata section describing media asset content that is usable by a media player program on the client computer to eliminate time consuming negotiation between client computer and server computer and provide a more efficient transmission of media asset content from the server computer to the at least one client computer, the transfer file informing each client computer of what client computer resources, including network connection bandwidth, client computer processing speed, and memory size that must be reserved or allocated for the incoming transfer file media asset.

31.	(New) A transfer file as in claim 30, wherein the transfer file is parsable by each of the plurality of client computers so that the client computers can identify resources required for the various parts of the transfer file without a negotiation with the server computer and allocate client computer resources required for the various parts of the transfer file.

32.   (New) A transfer file as in claim 31, wherein signature identifies the transfer file format and permits identification by each client computer of the remaining portions of the transfer file including the header section.

33.   (New) A transfer file as in claim 32, wherein the header section identifies client computer resources including the sizes of the asset metadata, media content, and user metadata.

34.   (New) A transfer file as in claim 33, wherein transfer file header section identification of client computer resources including the sizes of the asset metadata, media content, and user metadata permits allocation of resources on each client computer as well as in an asset metadata database, in a user metadata database, and in a user file system.

35.   (New) An electronic data stored in a computer readable medium including digitally encoded data for distributing media content from a server computer to a plurality of client computers in the form of a digital data encoding a transfer file having a file format for efficient streaming of media assets from the server computer to the plurality of client computers in the form of a transfer file that is adapted for point-to-point and point-to-multipoint distribution of the transfer file between the server computer and the plurality of client computers across a computer network, the digital data encoding the transfer file comprising:

    a signature indicating the format of the transfer file;

    a header section including information related to various portions of the transfer file, said header section including media asset type information, bit rate information describing a bit rate at which a media asset plays out on the plurality of client computers, information indicating the time duration of the media asset, and size information for various portions of the transfer file including an index file size information;

    an asset metadata section describing media asset content, said asset metadata section including a source host name, a source asset identifier, and a value indicating a number of plays that the media asset can be played out on the client computer to reduce negotiation between the server computer and the client computer and to facilitate a point-to-point or point-to-multipoint distribution of media content;

media content that is capable of being displayed to a user at the at least one client computer; and

user metadata that describes the media content and is capable of being displayed to the user;

the transfer file format being organized to include the asset metadata section describing media asset content that is usable by a media player program on the client computer to eliminate time consuming negotiation between client computer and server computer and provide a more efficient transmission of media asset content from the server computer to the at least one client computer, the transfer file informing each client computer of what client computer resources, including network connection bandwidth, client computer processing speed, and memory size that must be reserved or allocated for the incoming transfer file media asset.

36.   (New) An electronic data as in claim 35, wherein the transfer file is parsable by each of the plurality of client computers so that the client computers can identify resources required for the various parts of the transfer file without a negotiation with the server computer and allocate client computer resources required for the various parts of the transfer file.

37.   (New) An electronic data as in claim 36, wherein signature identifies the transfer file format and permits identification by each client computer of the remaining portions of the transfer file including the header section.

38.   (New) An electronic data as in claim 37, wherein the header section identifies client computer resources including the sizes of the asset metadata, media content, and user metadata.

39.   (New) An electronic data as in claim 38, wherein transfer file header section identification of client computer resources including the sizes of the asset metadata, media content, and user metadata permits allocation of resources on each client computer as well as in an asset metadata database, in a user metadata database, and in a user file system.